

CORADDI



magazine of the arts at unc-g april/may

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Waiting for Godot

Estragon: I can't go on like this.

Vladimir: That's what you think.

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•CORADDI 1980

BOOK REVIEWS

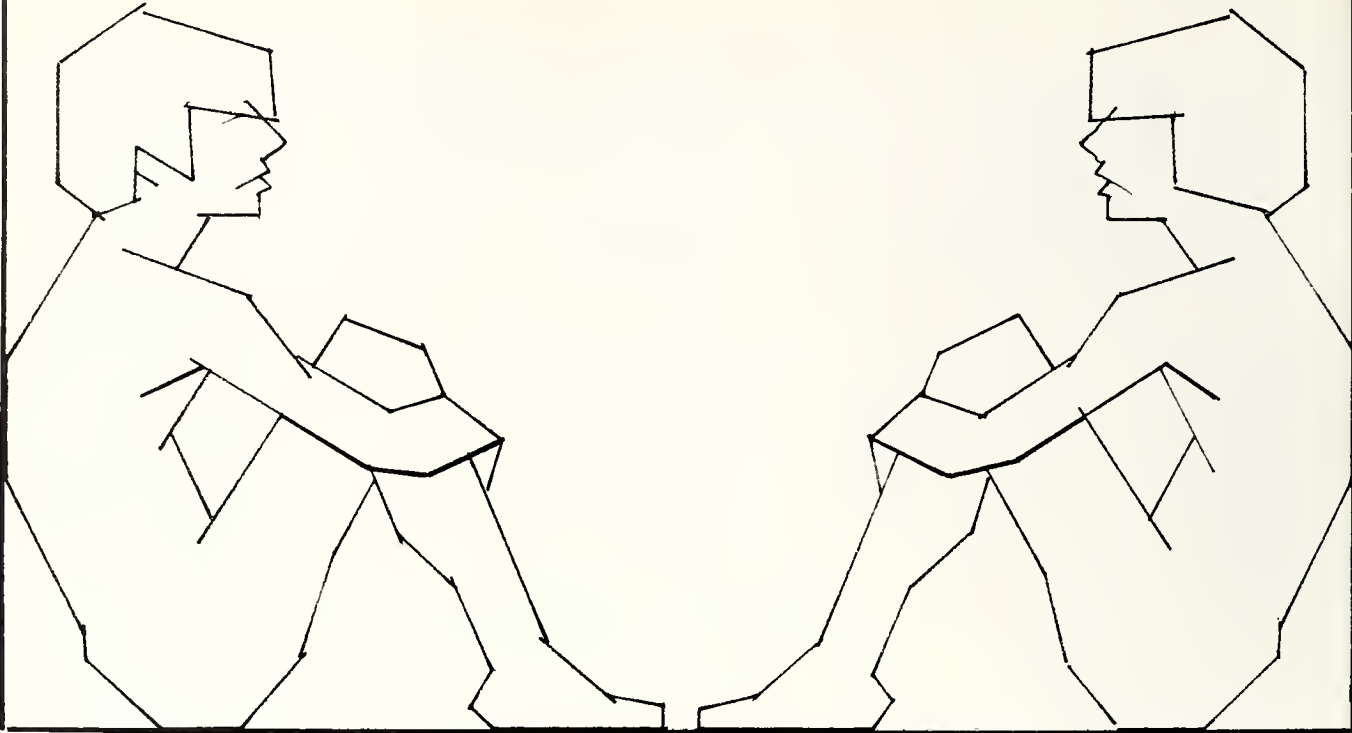


Illustration by Fred Pierce

In his first novel, the markedly successful *Edwin Mullhouse*, Steven Millhauser delightfully portrayed childhood as a state of genius; with his most recent return to the scene, *Portrait of a Romantic*, he shares with us his equally intriguing vision of adolescence as a Romantic condition.

The young Romantic around whom all of Millhauser's astute narrative observations center is the perpetually restless, painfully sensitive, keenly aware, and altogether engrossing Arthur Grumm. Via the retrospective narration of the now 29-year-old Arthur Grumm, Millhauser totally immerses us in Arthur's tumultuous adolescence with an uncanny ability to depict this condition in all its desperate, tentative, chameleon-like splendor.

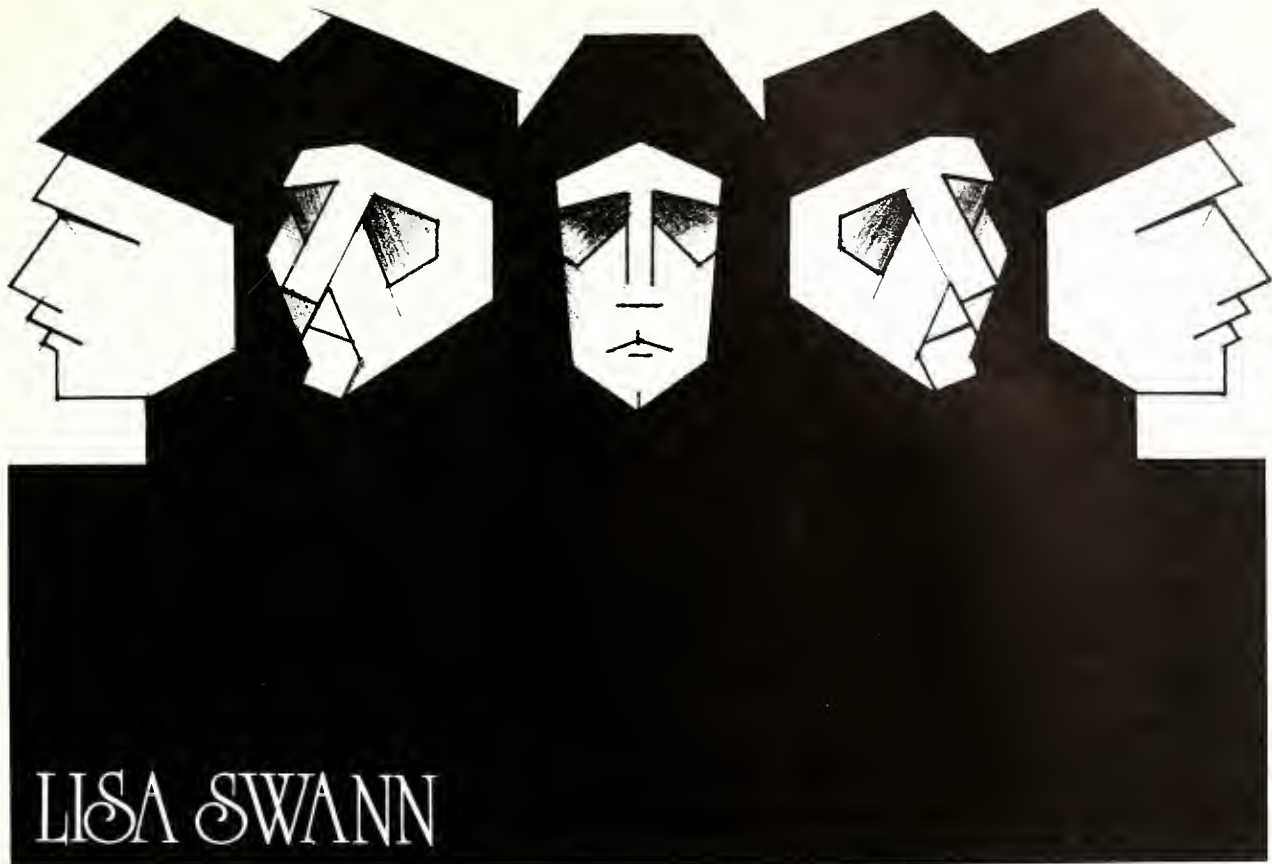
The adult Arthur Grumm recalls the "dark angels of adolescence" as serving the important function of "personality crystalization," and pays many a tribute to those he

feels were of significant influence during this formative period, his parents receiving their share of the credit as Arthur, after recalling his childhood as a hopeless dreamer, points out: "My father failed to realize that if I was a dreamer then he himself was at least partially to blame. Even then I must have understood that his hobbies were nothing but his dreams—bright gashes of color amid the browns and grays of his everyday life." Later, he continues: "If my love of dreaming derives from my father, it is to my mother that I owe my high sense of order in the scheme of things; of the folded napkin and the closed drawer, the pressed pantsleg and the polished toe; the ironed hour and the tucked-in afternoon. And perhaps it is to her as well that I owe my fatal attraction to all their wild opposites."

One of Millhauser's most fascinatingly depicted characteristics of Grumm's "Romantic condition" is the dire eagerness to

experience the forbidden. Young Arthur makes numerous forays into the delightful realm of the forbidden during his adolescence, becoming more daring with each venture, but the most memorable of these danger-courting experiences are the sessions in the playroom closet where Arthur and his cousin, Marjorie, both in the early stages of adolescence, play an altogether innocent but sweetly illicit game of "show and tell." Recalls Arthur with respect to these sessions: "For what I sought, hidden in darkness with my cousin Marjorie, was not the crude pleasure of sense, but the subtle pleasure of transgression . . . what I sought was the dreamlike delight of leaving the bright oppressive world of the all too dearly familiar and entering the dark, deep, boundless realm of the oh so dazzlingly forbidden."

Millhauser has created with Arthur Grumm a character that compels one to bear with the highly continued on page 4



Oliver Crawford, in his emotionally-charged debut novel, *The Execution*, weaves a shocking tale of vengeance that demonstrates his almost uncanny ability to communicate with the reader in a way that masks no intensity of feeling. One is wholly absorbed as he examines the lives of five individuals driven by compelling forces much greater than themselves to commit an act of pitiless revenge, an act totally out of context with the lives they lead.

The perpetrators of the act of vengeance are five ordinary women of varying ages, lifestyles, and financial status. To most people, they have nothing more in common than the fact that they have met every Wednesday night for twenty years to play the Chinese game of Mah Jong; very rarely do these five women otherwise associate. Despite the fact that these women do not seem to be intimate, abiding friends, they all share a very important common denominator, which,

although never spoken of by mutual consent, draws them into a much tighter bond than even they can realize: all five women — four Jews and a Catholic— share the experience of having been confined in Birkenau, the female compound of the Auschwitz concentration camp. They all suffered unspeakable indignities, degradation, and mental as well as physical mutilation, ranging from serving as “white rats” in grotesque medical experiments to seeing family and friends brutally murdered.

They also share the most outrageous degradation of all, that of being savagely raped by the director of medical experiments at the compound, Dr. Wilhelm Gehbert, alias “Butcher of Birkenau.” Despite this, they have miraculously survived, and one senses that this survival factor is the strongest “bonding agent” among them. Survivors that they are, they have worked to build new

lives in order to better cope with their horrid pasts. The emotional and physical scars, though deep, are buried by the desire to live their present lives as fully as possible through husbands, families, friends and jobs. They all feel that their survival is complete, until, without warning, a grim reminder of the past suddenly appears, catapulting them into a world of dark, unbearable memories. Dr. Wilhelm Gehbert, the “Butcher of Birkenau,” responsible for their past hell and the hell of countless others, has escaped punishment for his crimes and is alive and well under the ironically Jewish assumed identity of “Papa Grossman,” restaurant proprietor. This is inadvertently discovered when one of the women innocently wanders into Papa Grossman’s restaurant for lunch. She goes unrecognized, but she immediately knows who he is; his face is indelibly stamped in her mind. She notifies the others, and through

continued on page 4

Portrait of a Romantic

descriptive and often laborious reading encountered in the book, a character with the ability to conjure up all the pain and yearning of adolescence as we follow him on his journey through those often anguished years when one's own peers can be the cruelest, and the whole world more often than not seems hell-bent on indifference.

One cannot help but ache as Arthur desperately, falteringly searches for love and friendship among the peer group he finds so hard to relate to:

For there they were, my new coevals, with their frowns and their smiles, and their foot-balls, and their jackknives-and there I was with my chin in my hand, dreaming of islands and Edens. Oh, I did my work well, all too well; I said hi! to everyone. But it was as if I was a mere visitor among them, sharing in none of their habits.

Despite repeated rejection by members of his peer group, Arthur never really becomes embittered toward them, but with a Romantic's tendency toward disenchantment, finally dismisses the majority of this group as "boring."

Arthur is perhaps at his most endearing as he compulsively woos his female idol, the equally romantic, bedridden Eleanor Schumann, whom Arthur finds "as bewitching in her very pallor and illness and absence as the Lady of the Camellias." She is his "Lady Eleanor," he her "Lord Artoor," and together they create a dream world which frees Arthur from the boring, disenchanting world of his peers. With Eleanor, Arthur is at his romantic best, still in the throes of awkward adolescence, but more able to reckon with the "condition" on his own terms.

While Millhauser sometimes has a tendency to become too entrenched in elaborate descriptions, giving the book a somewhat

labored quality and considerably slowing down the reading pace, *Portrait of a Romantic* is wrought with such feeling and knowing compassion that it is a captivating, pleasurable book to read with an unforgettable cast of characters.

The Execution

their subsequent trips to the restaurant, his true identity is confirmed—genial, jovial "Papa Grossman" is in reality the "Butcher of Birkenau."

This discovery forces each woman to relive her past experiences in Birkenau through torturous flashbacks, provided by Crawford with an unrelenting vividness of pain and horror. While he does not martyr his characters or raise them to exalted heights, he spares us none of the their anguish with his restructuring of their pasts, gradually creating an overwhelming awareness that these unwanted exhumations cannot be forgotten or forgiven. This beast from the past, responsible for a grand total of 5,450 murders and immeasurable pain, committed without earthly retribution, cannot possibly continue to exist so casually, so smugly unrepentant, so nearby. The words of one anguished woman are but one of many foreshadowings of what the future inevitably holds: "...that piece of syphilitic afterbirth, Doctor Wilhelm Gehbert. I could vomit just thinking that he is still alive and well and living in scenic Topanza Canyon."

By the time the five women have overcome their individual barriers enough to join together in undisputed agreement to realize that an ultimate act of vengeance is the only course of action to free them from past horrors and subsequently abate their present miseries, we cannot help but cheer them on in their mission, cruel and inhumane as it may seem. The bravery and determination of these women as they bond together to commit an act that totally repulses them in addition to relieving their pain is most astounding; the torture they

must endure in order to have their emancipating revenge is very apparent in its intensity. It is easy for one to fear that these ladies will not accomplish their gruesome task, that the torture will become too intense.

As events tensely mount to culminate in the inevitable climax, Crawford allows us to see the true vulnerability of the five women, subsequently illuminating the genuine depth of their bravery, the necessity of their mission; these are five people with everything to lose — husbands, families, jobs — because of the act of vengeance they are compelled to perpetrate on this horrible beast from the past. Drawing on each other for strength and assurance as never before, the five women finally seem to merge together as a singularly dynamic unit, striving only towards their goal of vengeance. Soon, all else seems inconsequential, and their mission is accomplished, accompanied by the promised freedom from the past. In their unmitigated, well-earned glee, they are able to propose an unflinching toast, "To the late unlamented Butcher of Birkenau. May the mangy prick rot in hell!" One cannot help rejoicing with these good women, despite any negative feelings about the act of murder itself, and Crawford makes it easy to agree that "to the commandment THOU SHALT NOT KILL should have been added another: WILHELM GEHBERT SHALT NOT HAVE BEEN BORN."

When unforeseen repercussions do arise to threaten their victory, almost as if to dictate that "Gehbert, in his grave, would be residually triumphant to the end," the five refuse to falter even in the face of sure destruction of their present lives. Crawford suspensefully leaves the reader uncertain for a while as to whether or not these women will actually be forced, by the dictates of legality, to pay for their "crime," when they so desperately feel that "the worse crime would be Gehbert living." The wait while true justice battles

NOTES

I have been impressed by the illusion of disillusion
and have no resource with which to confuse you.



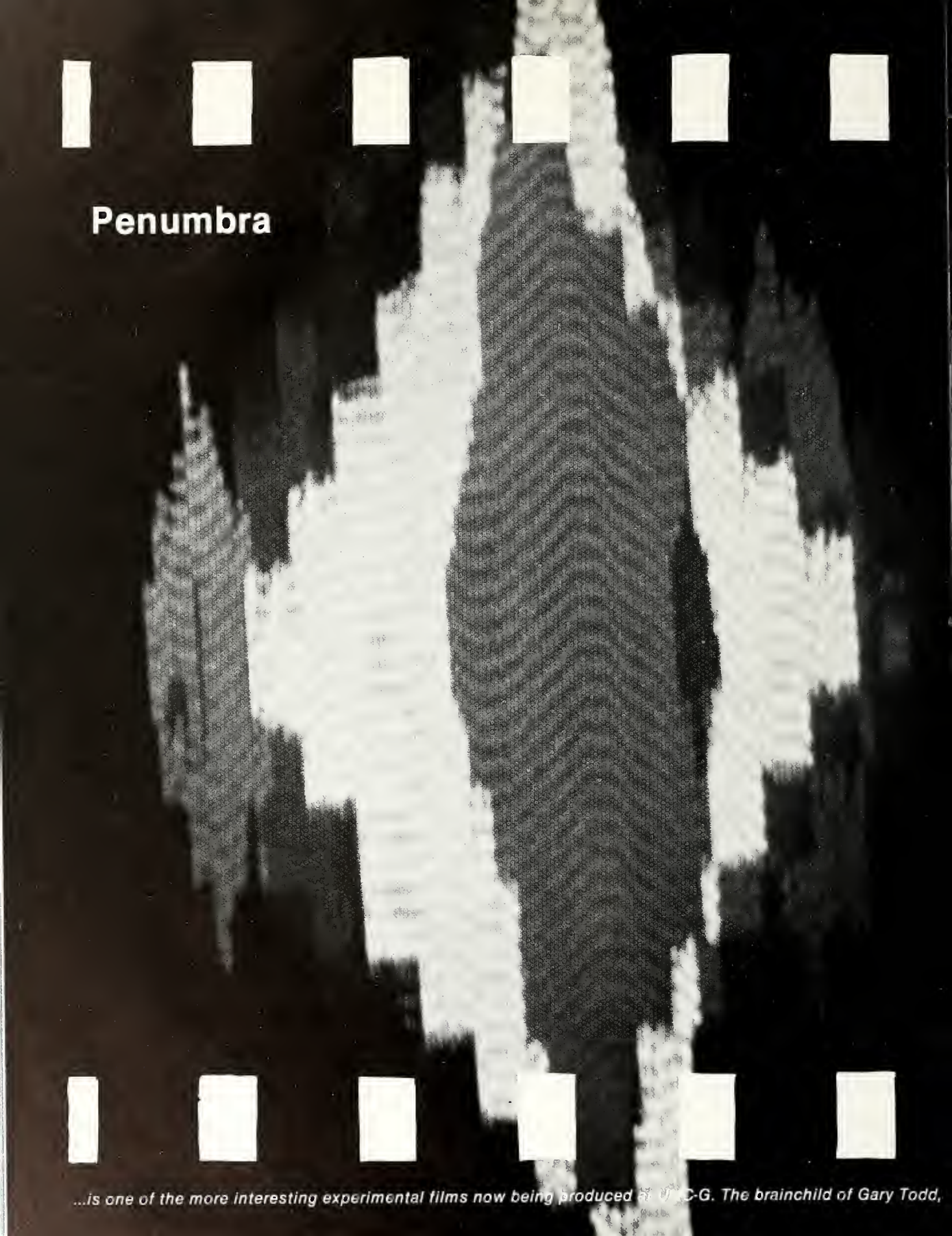
What is *Coraddi*? What are its functions? How are these functions executed? Many people have taken time to give me their ideas about these questions in the last few months. Based on what I have heard and learned about the *Coraddi*, I have come to several conclusions.

The *Coraddi* now combines short stories, poetry, artwork, book reviews, coverage of fine arts events and advertising in each issue. For a small staff and a limited budget, this is a difficult, far-reaching job. The present format presents many difficult problems. Often events covered in the magazine are months old by the publication date. At the same time, it is difficult to gather short stories, poetry and artwork. These are not submitted as a rule, but must be sought out by the *Coraddi* staff. With these problems in mind, I propose that the journalistic fine arts coverage be separated from publication of student short stories, poetry and artwork. During each semester, the *Coraddi* would publish small newsprint issues containing essays, fine arts coverage, calendars, letters, reviews and advertising. These issues would probably be published monthly. At the end of each semester, an issue would be published for student prose, poetry and artwork. This issue would be in a magazine format with color reproductions. In the past, *Coraddi* has published works of local poets and writers. I feel that this is a function of *Coraddi* that should be continued, but at this time it is unclear if money will be available for these projects.

I feel that the format changes proposed will offer more opportunities for a stronger interaction between the five fine arts departments in the University (English, Art, Dance, Music and Communications-Theatre). I will seek out a faculty advisor in each of these departments to provide feedback on the direction and progress of the magazine. Ultimately, I hope that *Coraddi* can serve as an organization where writers, artists, dancers, musicians, actors and others can meet, exchange ideas and grow as individuals.

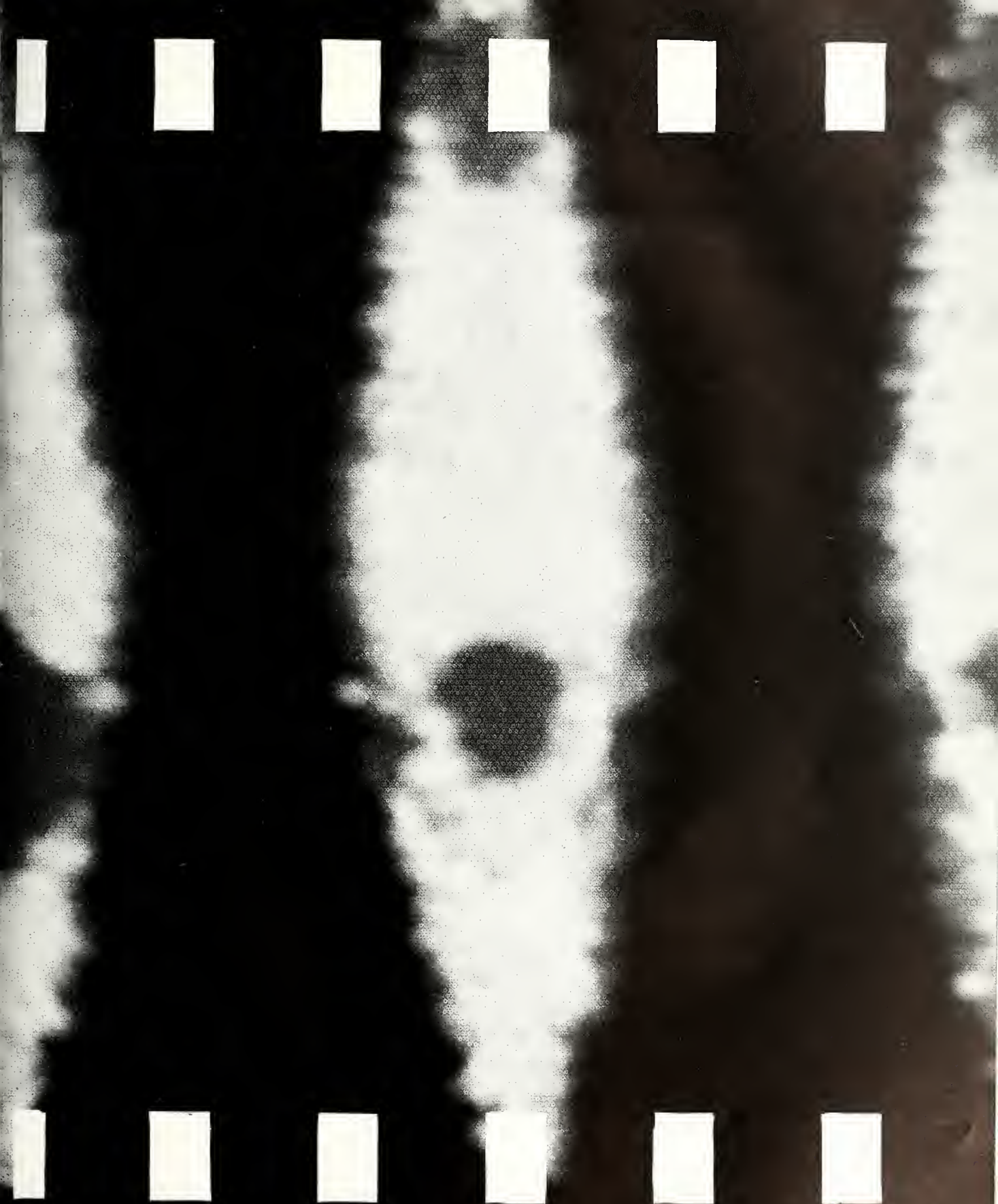
This is what I foresee as *Coraddi's* potential. These ideas will continue to change and grow as I become more familiar with the role of *Coraddi*. It is important to realize that one person's ideas are not enough to make a magazine. I need your ideas. Think about the questions I have raised and let me hear *your* ideas.



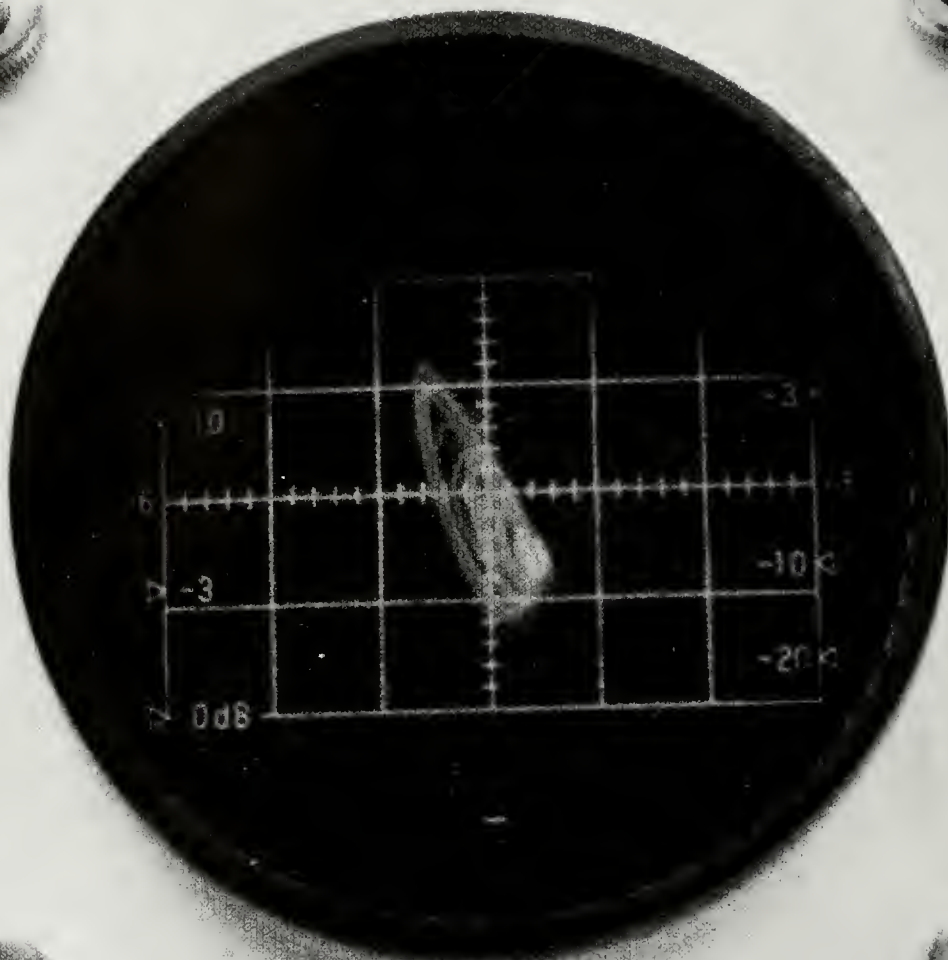


Penumbra

...is one of the more interesting experimental films now being produced in U.S.A. The brainchild of Gary Todd,



the film is a series of symmetrical patterns produced when tape-recorded synthesizer music is either fed into an



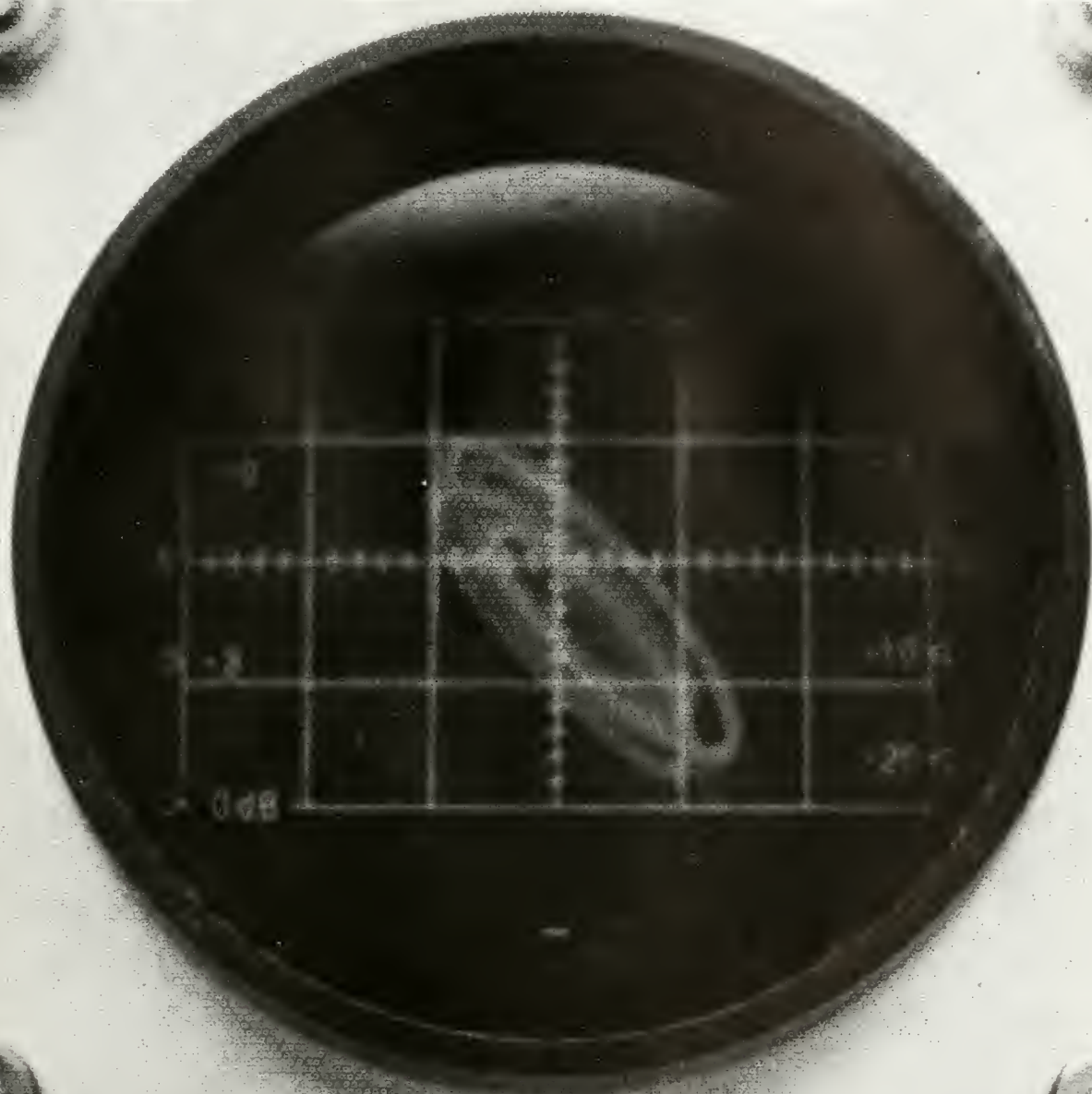
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LBO-32B OSCILLOSCOPE

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DANCE



MFA THESIS





The Spring Thesis Concert consisted of varied styles and approaches to choreography. In the course of the two nights, eight pieces were presented, six from undergraduate students, and two from graduate students.

One might be reminded of the historical influences in today's dance through these choreographic presentations. The traditionalists' approach, content influencing the physical form of the dance, is apparent in some of the works, while others rely on the form standing on its own, without plot, line, or preconceived meanings. Suzanne Langer, dance critic and aesthetician, writes that significant form consists of an inner subjectivity that results in the objective, or outer form. These elements are balanced, determined, and shaped by the choreographer in the creative process of making a dance. The

concert reveals the choices the choreographers have made in relation to form and meaning.

The technical skills were intentionally varied throughout the concert, ranging from strong balletic influences to everyday movement. Movement patterns also reflect historical evolution of dance, whether it is the abstract ballet of Balanchine involved with strict technique or the process and everyday movement connected with the dance going on at Judson Church in the '60's.

Art movements have also had significant influence on dance. Evident in the concert were Dadiest humor, classical lines, romantic themes, a cubistic look at all sides, strong design elements as related to Op art, and pure entertainment or popular art. Philip Phenix, in *Dance: An Art in Academe*, has written that dance relates to other arts in three ways:

1) the auxiliary relationship, 2) the shared formal prospective, and 3) the kinesthetic element. He states that only in dance is the kinesthetic element intentionally and systematically developed. During the thesis concert, one can experience various levels of this kinesthetic development. It appears that through the evolution of dance, choreographers have realized that movement is indeed the very foundation of the art. Again, varieties are apparent in the concert ranging from set and formed movement to new experiences in contact improvisation.

Choreographers are perhaps more challenged today than ever. Through influences of the past, they are able to stand on the shoulders of others and move ahead, pressing toward the further development of dance.

By Amy Yapp

SPECIAL ART SECTION



Lynn Morrow



Guillermo Velasco



Jamie Sanderlin



Katherine Pasco



Cathy Ausdenmoore



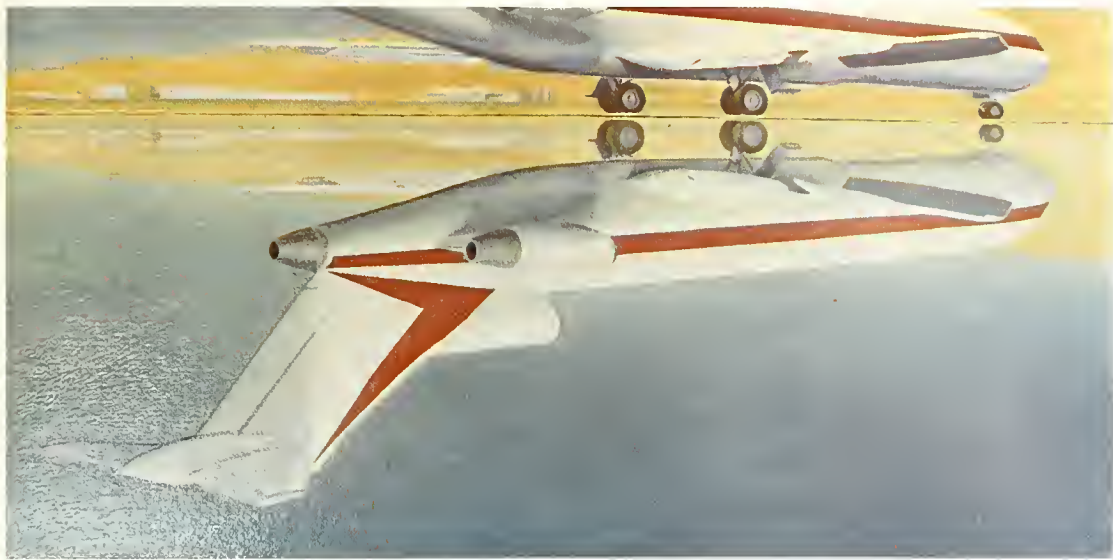
Van Coble



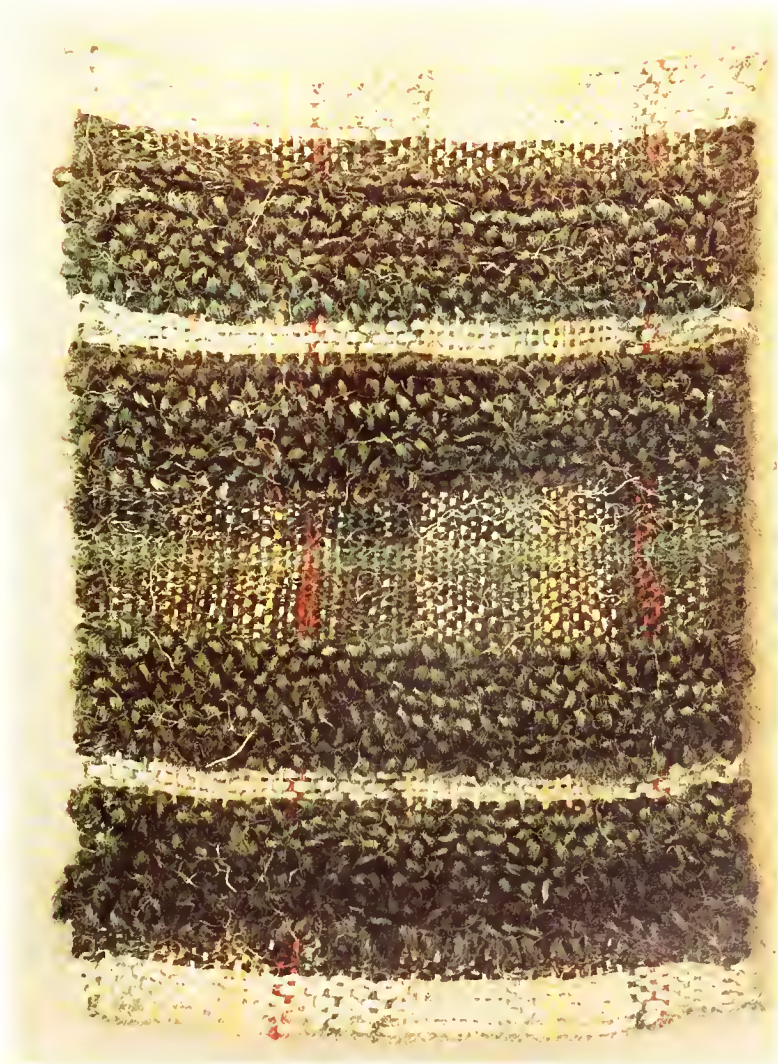
Maura Hannon



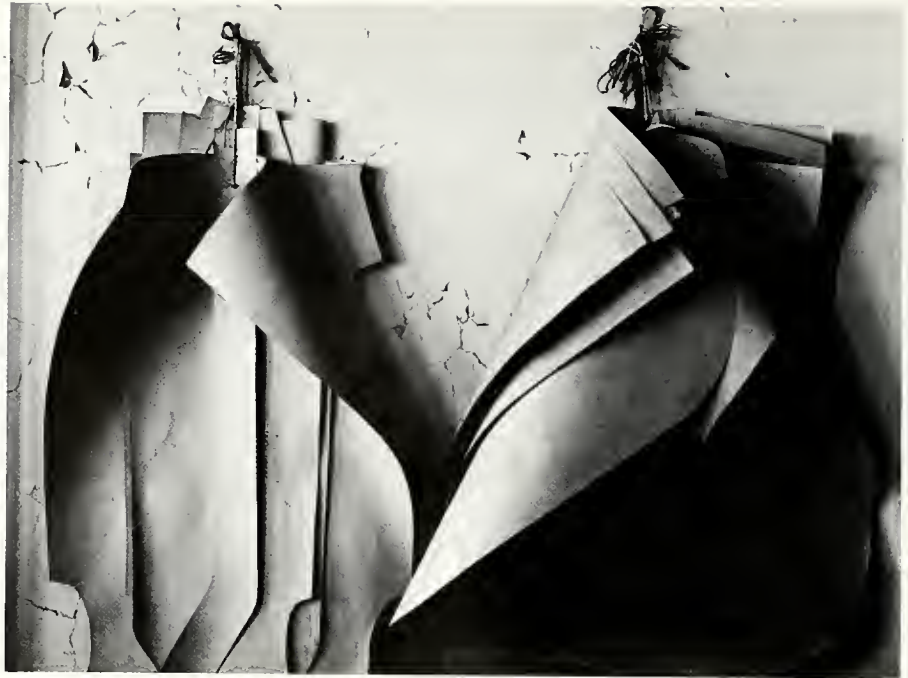
Duane Creech



David Smith



Caren Carr



Becky Lewis



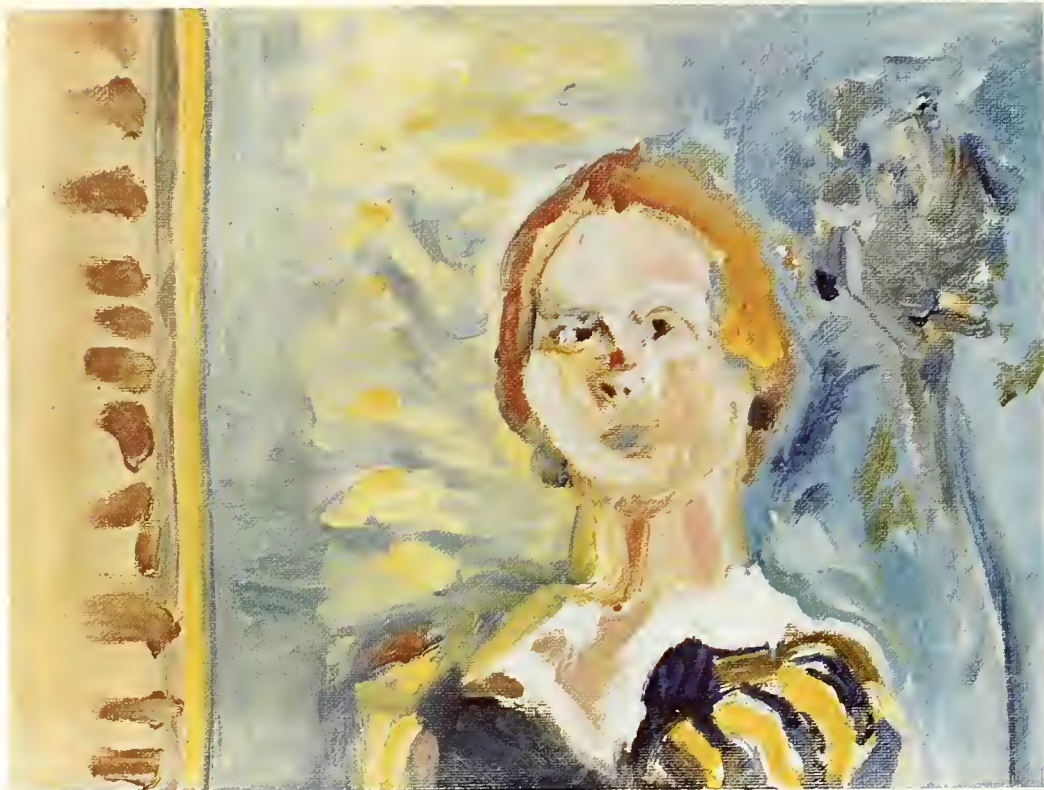
Nancy Teagarden



Jack Bowman



Amanda Annis



Kathryn Brandenburg



Mary Cromartie

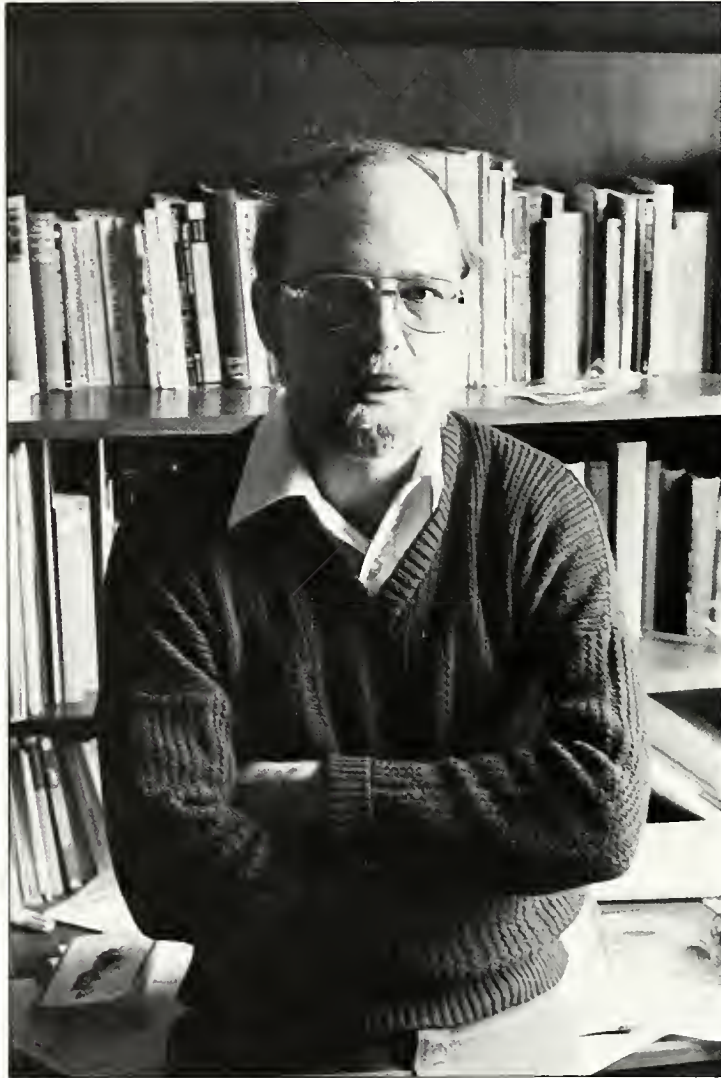


Joe Fassnacht



Alan LeQuire

MENNEN'S HAMLET



by

GARRICK D. MATHESON

Dr. Richard Mennen is the Director of *Hamlet*. I spoke at length with Dr. Mennen about his approach to directing *Hamlet*, his ideas on directing and the theatre in general. Dealing with such issues as proper imagery and conceptual analysis could be a rather tedious chore, but Mennen's sense of humor kept our heady discussions delightfully relaxed.

Dr. Mennen toured as an actor in *Hamlet*, playing the Ghost and the Player King. He has also played Claudius and been in the audience of a number of different productions of *Hamlet*. He confided that he has always wanted to play the role of Hamlet himself. Still, I had to ask him why he chose to do *Hamlet*.

"Personally, I was interested in doing *Hamlet* because it was the one Shakespeare play right now that I was most interested in doing. For me, it's an unresolved play because of my experience with it. And, I have a tendency to come back to plays that I'm familiar with: not as a director, but in some other way."

What about exploring new work? Isn't there more to discover through pioneering new work than there is in returning to familiar material?

"I think in both cases it's really the same thing. If you go back to something because there's something in it that's calling you, drawing you, it must be not simply to repeat it, but there's something that hasn't been done yet, something left undone, something that you want to complete. So, it's still like an adventure into another territory, perhaps a different kind of adventure than it would be to go into a new script, but they're both really the same in that the adventure's there either way."

Hamlet is surely the most famous, most studied, most debated of Shakespeare's plays. There certainly would be adventure in tackling such a monumental task. With a smile, Mennen acknowledged the difficulties.



Illustration by Hillarie Johnston

"I think *Hamlet*'s a very interesting play to work on, but no one should ever direct it: it should never be produced, because there's no way you could do it successfully, there's no way. There's no way anyone could possibly produce *Hamlet* in a way that's startling, successful and satisfying to everybody. No one should ever really do it, except for the opportunities it provides for doing some interesting work."

Might *Hamlet* not be overdone?

"Since I've already chosen it and gone through that process at this point, I don't care whether someone thinks it's overdone. And actually, probably only about ten percent of the audience will have ever seen it before; no, it hasn't been beaten to death. Also, for me personally, there's not much difference in doing *Hamlet* or some other play — it's always a matter of discovery."

So the play was chosen, and an adventure is born. Where it is born is in the abstract image realm of the mind. Ideas, feelings, visions, images must be harnessed, and some unity and means for their expression must be discovered. Questions like, 'What is the play about; what is it saying to us?' have to be answered.

"All really great works of art, and particularly tragedy, really are dealing with some kind of perspective — not understanding, maybe experience is a better word — of some of the paradoxes that lie at the heart of the human experience. The paradox in *Hamlet* is the interaction, the existence simultaneously of madness and great insight. The concept that the madman, the poet and the lover are all allied was very popular with Shakespeare and the Elizabethans. They are both sane and insane, wise and foolish. This is an insight into human beings which I think is important in our particular period. The Dionysian aspect of our nature is almost totally suffocated by the highly controlled, mechanized, computerized, formalized world we live in. I think we see Hamlet in

such a world. His world is not like ours directly — his world is a world of disease, a world of a growing cancer — but what it's saying is that in a diseased world, you're going to be mad. You have to be mad in order to function. And the only way the cancer in the world can be purged is by death and destruction and somehow somebody else coming in who is not diseased."

Whew! You're no optimist, Dr. Mennen.

"Well, you know, tragedies don't present us with an optimistic viewpoint. The optimism comes from a deeper source than 'things will work out.' The optimism comes from knowing that this is the way the world is, and I'm going to become corrupt because of that, but there at least can be the struggle and the recognition of the struggle and the recognition that though this is the way it is, this isn't *it*. Not that there's more, but there is compassion — that's what we end up with in tragedy, compassion — for the human condition, which is piteous."

So it's 'I struggle therefore I am?'

"I struggle therefore I become."
As the director reads, thinks, and watches his actors work onstage, images form. These images carry not only the overall meanings of the play but make their own statements within the smaller context of scenes. They begin as ideas or mental pictures. I asked Dr. Mennen what were some of the ideas or images he was working on.

"I've got the idea of Hamlet on a stage, Hamlet looking for direction, looking for identity, looking for action. Specifically, he's looking for action through theatre, which is the imitation of action. Theatre organizes and structures action which we don't do in life: we're constantly trying, but always failing. But Hamlet uses art to structure action, he uses theatre in the play-within-a-play scene to discover that the king is guilty and what role he (Hamlet) should play. I

like that device, and in this production we established it by creating on the set a sort of stage on a stage on a stage, because action — or nonaction — is one of the major thoughts of the play: to act or not to act, to be or not to be. One of the major ways Hamlet tries to grope with his own dilemma about acting is through the theatre; he stages a play. In staging that play, he discovers something."

Mennen went on to speak of Hamlet and Man and observed, isolated by being watched. He sees Hamlet as confused between reality and illusion. Holding a mirror up to himself and to life, Hamlet can't decide which is real, the mirror image of himself or the man holding the mirror. To be, or not to be, took on a new depth, yet another level. Mennen cut off talk about ideas and imagery, however, saying that he wanted to avoid the director's hand being so visible that the audience could immediately recognize the director's symbolic devices for just that.

"I want to create suggestions, maybe things that aren't really explainable, but that create a context in which to perceive what's going on. I don't want to create a closed interpretation of the play, 'this is *my* interpretation of *Hamlet*.' There have been thousands of those. I want to create a context which is very suggestive, very evocative without clearly saying or naming what is being evoked but clearly a part of this whole play. There is something about the character of Hamlet and this play which is something of a mystery, and it's for the audience to figure it out."

Dr. Mennen wants to allow the audience to do their own thinking, draw their own conclusions. His goal is to keep the thoughts and mysteries clearly before the audience and not let his personal influence cloud that communication.

"There are very profound things that are said in the play, and I just want to make sure they hear those words, those profound thoughts, in the context of the whole. The

problem of the rehearsal process is how to make this play, which is so heavy in its words and ideas, into a continuous stream of action."

The form of theatre is action — bodies and voices and gestures in action on a stage. Aristotle called it spectacle. Ideas must be translated into imagery in action, and in this expression through action theatre is able to communicate ideas and feelings that otherwise could not be objectified. The director's task is to get the ideas of the play into action, spectacle, through his actors. There is, of course, much thoughtful preparation required in advance of the rehearsal process, but Dr. Mennen's approach depends a great deal upon input from his cast, as well.

"I discover things through working on the play with people much more than I discover reading about it or just rereading the play. I try to create the context, the atmosphere, which enables the actors to take their own direction, go whatever way they want to go. When the actors start contributing something, then I've got more material to work with, beyond the actor's voice, body and presence on stage. Aspects of personality and temperament reveal themselves, and then the director can work with those as well. Indeed, the interpretation of a scene gets shaped by these contributions. That's why a lot of directors continually work with the same actors."

Getting to know the actors within the working situation avoids the pitfall of expecting things out of them that they are really incapable of giving or ignoring that which they are capable of. According to Mennen, the really good directors modify their interpretation as they see their actors work. So, like Hamlet, Dr. Mennen discovers by putting actors on a stage.

"I discovered something about



Illustration by Hillarie Johnston



Ophelia which I think nobody else has discovered, at least I've never read it. It is why Ophelia describes to Polonius the scene where Hamlet comes to her bedroom with his clothes all messed up, and he's so pale. The reason why we don't see that scene and the reason why it was a mistake in Olivier's film — you see, he filmed it, the thing that Ophelia described, rather than having her describe it — is that it's not just the description that's important, nor is it simply saying something about Hamlet. What it is, is Ophelia's action; that's the point where she falls in love with Hamlet; she couldn't have fallen in love with him if she hadn't described him because in describing him she expresses and formulates her feelings. She takes the role of Hamlet, she plays Hamlet, and in the sympathetic action of playing Hamlet she understands him, she knows him, and she falls in love."

Making these discoveries, shaping the various scenes and interactions, are all specific kinds of work. A broader application then must be found.

"Right now the whole idea of communicating to the audience something of the emotional impact of the play is a major thing. What I'm working with right now are the basics with the actors and the staging and trying to just make this credible on a moment-to-moment level within the scenes. So, I don't have a thorough line of action for this play yet. I don't see this play as a total action; I don't have a directorial concept, an overriding idea. I feel that it's there, but I haven't really articulated it yet; I'm not getting to that yet. I've got to put the first attention on playing the scene out, discovering the play by discovering every scene in the play."

In working on the scenes, which

comes first, the idea, the suggestion or the movement by the actors? For instance, when you spoke of Hamlet and Man as being observed, had that been an idea that you wanted to put on stage, or did the image present itself in something you saw happening in rehearsal?

"The image came first; I'd never even said, 'Man being observed,' until just now. I work that way a lot: something will come to me — an image, a stage picture, a movement — which seems right. That's why I like actors to get off book (learn their lines) very, very quickly, so that they're cooking on the set. A lot of times I don't do any blocking (setting movement on stage) at all, just set it up and let the actors discover things."

I was curious to know whether an experienced, accomplished director ever finds himself having to go 'back to the basics' when putting together a play.

"I don't always, but I think I always should. You've always got to go back to the basics because that's the bedrock. If you don't, then you start getting highfaluting, and your work misses."

The basics, for Dr. Mennen, reach back to Aristotle and the elements of drama set forth in his *Poetics*: plot, character, thought, spectacle, diction and melody. Of these, the basic material with which to work is thought, and the job of both director and actor is to discover and express the thought of the play through the other elements. However, for one so well-versed in the scholarly side of theatre, Mennen expresses a predilection for working with people, in a practical theatre, a theatre more of action than of thought. I asked him how he would ideally like to mount *Hamlet*.

"I wouldn't be producing it on a proscenium stage; I'd be producing in some interesting non-theatre unit. I'd create a company of a few people, and we'd work on

the play from the point of view of the particular space, and this text, and what we individually and collectively wanted to explore, with me being the final arbiter. I'd work for a long period of time with the people doing lighting, costuming and scenery: we'd work on the basis of discovering bit by bit what works. It's absurd to think that for all kinds of theatre plays you can come up with the settings and costumes before you've even started working.

"So, of course, ours is not the ideal situation, but not having the ideal situation simply becomes part of my given circumstances. In either case, your work is to see what the possibilities are, reject some . . . What the result is will take part of its form from the particular circumstances: a large stage, that the actors are a given shape and size, that we're working in a conventional way, that there's a certain idea about the costuming already — it's just part of the materials."

Do you have any plans to create the opportunity to work in an ideal situation for yourself in this university situation?

"Long range, perhaps, I see some possibilities to work this way, but I think it's very difficult in a university situation to work in this laboratory way. People's energies are so diverse it's very difficult for people to concentrate. It's the real reason why actors particularly have got to get out of this kind of situation and work in different situations. They have no opportunity in a university to really focus; there are too many other things that they have to do."

Dou haven't allowed people to come in and watch rehearsals. What's your thinking behind closed rehearsals? Does it have anything to do with focusing concentration?

"There are two different reasons. One, I think having other people observe them makes them conscious of performing for the people. Right now that stuff — the





awareness of themselves performing, what they are making, and how it is seen — has to be funneled primarily through my eyes and the eyes of their fellow actors. Secondly, they're working; you're not ready to be observed when you're just trying to figure things out. When you're writing a term paper, you don't turn in your notes, your scribbles, your doodles. And the reason I don't let them talk to other people about their work is related to that. They want people's opinions, but those could be very dangerous opinions. The actor is very vulnerable at this certain stage of work, right? He gets outside opinions, and he tries to assimilate them, but he's not in a position to. That's why we have a director, so that feedback is controlled. And invariably, it's human nature, talking of this kind gets to be griping, and that just drains energy. And the actor begins to feel that he's been a bit of a cheat if he starts complaining about other actors. There's also a little

politics involved, too. If you don't let anybody know what's happening, it increases the anticipation."

Well, the anticipation has certainly been achieved. I'm full of curiosity. Let's talk about the character of Hamlet himself. What is it about the role of Hamlet that makes it such a prized one for actors?

"His emotional, intellectual responses are so various that he's a very fascinating character for actors to play, the ultimate material for the actor. There are not many characters in dramatic literature whom we know more about because he tells us, constantly, what he's thinking. We see him acting in all different kinds of circumstances as well; a far greater variety than we see in anybody else. Look at Tennessee Williams' characters, for example. They're active in the bedroom or drinking or— that's about it. We see Hamlet with his dead father the ghost, with his stepfather, with his mother,

his ex-girlfriend, his friends who he knows aren't friends, with his real friends, with his actors, with his dead girlfriend, his dead girlfriend's brother, right? We see him in all these situations, so we really know this character, yet he somehow seems to defy analysis. There's always been a mystery about that character. It's very interesting when Hamlet says to Guildenstern 'Would pluck out the mystery from me?'"

So Hamlet is a mysterious madman, a poet, a lover. I'd like to hear more about his madness.

"To have Hamlet as a madman directly contradicts the usual idea of him as a kind of prince, some kind of hero. I don't think he is; I think he's a madman. He progresses into madness, but at the same time, part of his madness is also the evil that he causes, which is partly his decision, but within the context and pressures of a man in a diseased world."

How in the world do you ap-





Thus conscience
does make
cowards
of us all:



Illustration by Hillarie Johnston

proach creating such a complex characterization?

"Essentially, the actor has got to find it his way. The way this work has been going is that first we concentrated on his thought, his intelligence. But what we were winding up with was an intellectualized Hamlet. Then I changed and said, 'Let's focus on his passion, his suffering, his progression into madness.' Alright, now we've got to combine those two things.

"It's so human, so real, so true, but to find it, to embody it, just takes enormous talent, for one thing. When he comes on and he says to Polonius, 'You are a fish-monger' — now, you've got to be a little crazy to say that, you have to say it in a way that indicates that you know it's crazy, and there also has to be behind it that where you're coming from is a lot of suffering."

He got back to some of the limitations of producing theatre in a university situation and how it makes it

nearly impossible for the actor to do the amount of research and studying that a role requires. Mennen feels that the attempt to put explorative theatre into an educational context is at present largely unsuccessful in American universities.

"Where education falters is that we've got an educational mechanism, and we ought to be applying that to our work. I mean, really everybody who was involved in *Hamlet* should have been set up so that first semester we all studied the background of the play in seminars. The thing is, that real research belongs to the university. It has to be understood that the end point of research is discovering whether something is possible or not. The university ought to be a place where you have that kind of pure research."

Mennen went on to add that due to economic considerations, most universities have had to sacrifice a research attitude with respect to theatre in favor of a box-office

oriented production schedule. As a result, actors don't get a chance to fully explore their art, in a wide variety of dramatic styles, roles and production situations.

Throughout the interviews with Dr. Mennen, it was apparent that much advance thought and preparation had gone into directing *Hamlet*. Still, Mennen was able to work in the 'here and now' with the actors. While this is really the only time and place to successfully work in theatre, it is a surprisingly difficult attitude to maintain. Under Richard Mennen's direction, Shakespeare's epic tragedy promises to be an exciting experience.

Coraddi apologizes for misprints in Kay Ferguson's poems in the last issue. The last line of "Baker's Beach" should read, "The power does not wander," and line 11 of "Parking" should read, "Here Cornwallis just blew up." Also the editor's note incorrectly stated that the drawings in the poetry section were intended as illustrations; they were not. The drawings were meant to stand independently of the poems.

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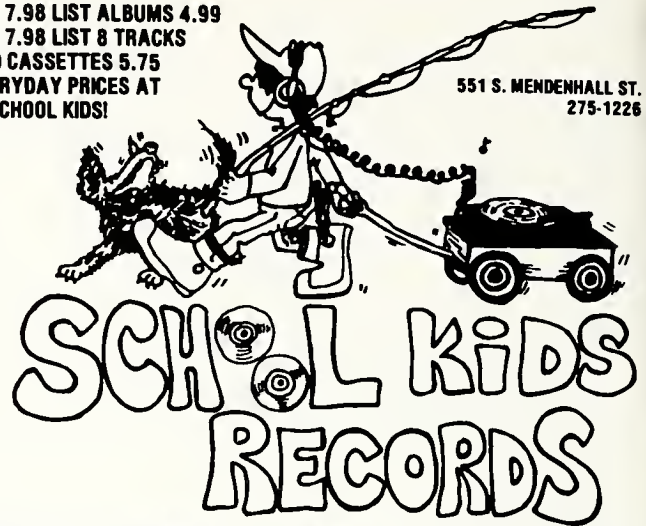
The Execution

legality to the triumphant, shocking end seems interminable as Crawford once again makes his characters endure incredible anguish.

The Execution is an energetic, moving novel with a tightly-controlled suspenseful plot that should keep the reader inextricably entwined in its pages until the very end. Crawford writes with a rare compassion that effectively keeps one in constant awe of his characters, perhaps the crucial element of the book. While the subject matter of the book is indeed serious and sometimes even horrible, the book itself provides such wonderful insight into human determination and bravery, that it is a joy and inspiration to read, a truly unforgettable book.

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